PESSIMIST HANDBOOK

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The less you know the happier you will be.

THE NEGATIVE PHILOSOPHY

People generally tend to think that heaping knowledge, obligations, material stuff, ,morality, social stuff, and the rest of it upon themselves is the way to live a life. Well, the body continues to live, but the mind dies under the weight of the rubbish that has been accumulated. The Negative Philosophy is an antidote, and this short book is just part of the thinking.

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Being a pessimist I don't expect many people will want to make a donation for this work - but just in case:

DONATE

Great news, your situation is hopeless.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This is part of a book I am putting together - although whether it ever sees the light of day is another matter. In any case, at least something will have been published in this much shortened edition.

So, this book is free to any sucker that wants to read it. It's full of aphorisms with a short commentary attached to each. I can be rude to my readers because it's free, and having paid nothing for it they have got nothing to complain about - and no, I don't want to no about the typos.

The orgy of optimism that is sweeping the planet is a sure sign that things are not good. Why would people need affirmations, phony passion, goals and other claptrap if everything was okay? Clearly it isn't, and so people cling to the new religion of optimism - because the future has to be better than the hell they live in right now.

But here is the twist - pessimists tend to be more successful and happier - the very things the optimist wants. Such cruel irony.

Every decision you ever make will be a mistake.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION

I don't think pessimists usually chase happiness, which is probably why they tend to be happy. Of course, no one can go around freely admitting to be a pessimist - if they don't want to be totally ostracized from society that is, although many pessimists would not have a problem with that. To admit to being a pessimist will generally result in being treated like a leper - someone with an unspeakable disease. Optimism has become religion with its adherents carefully mapping out how great the future will be because the present is unbearably painful. And the present is unbearably painful because none of their optimistic expectations have come to fruition. Optimism is after all just a fancy name for setting oneself up. To be an optimist one has to be a master of self-deception and denial.

A pessimist is not a pessimist because they like the word. Most pessimists are such because they have gained some insight into life - real life, not the version advertised by self-help gurus and other charlatans. So here is what happens in life. In broad outline you will experience pleasures and pains and then you will die. The knack is to minimize the pains, and as far as possible maximize the pleasures. It would make sense not to set ourselves up for

pain - as the optimist does. Managing our expectations is really what pessimism is all about, although it is also a world view based on reality instead of fiction. Reality says that the world has no regard for our ambitions and desires. As such it is folly to expect the world to deliver what our sickly-sweet imaginations might dream up - uncountable wealth, global fame, a private jet, the most attractive sexual partners lining up at the door. It's not going to happen for almost every one of us, so why actively make oneself dissatisfied with present circumstances and introduce pain into our lives when we don't have to.

The truly perverse thing in all of this is that pessimism leads to happiness. The popular image of sour faced, grumpy pessimists is just myth. If someone manages their expectations and does not expect the universe to break all its laws to satisfy their wild imaginings, then of course such a person is going to be happy - why wouldn't they be? That pessimism is the route to happiness is perhaps the greatest secret of all in this fucked-up society of ours. And it will remain a secret because the power-possessors need optimists to work themselves to death to fill up their overflowing coffers. Set goals, schedule your life, be passionate about your work, be grateful, live dog-eat-dog, have a positive attitude - such are the mantras that come from our overlords because they serve their purpose so well. Learn the twelve secrets of success and become like Bill Gates. The fact that success is nearly always a matter of luck - being in the right place, at the right time, with the

right product - is largely overlooked. And so the heroes of the day strut around like turkeys telling us all how to live our lives if we want to be like them. You can safely ignore all this pomposity. Lady Fortuna may smile upon you, and then again she may not. In fact, it is much more likely she will drop a big pile of smelly misfortune in your lap - so don't live your life waiting for that lucky break, it's probably not going to happen.

In this short book you will find a number of aphorisms that might prove useful in living the life of a pessimist. Some of them are quite hard hitting, but are nonetheless true. I was going to say "have fun with it" - but that would be a horribly optimistic thing to say.

An optimist is someone who is a master of self-deception and denial.

EVERYDAY LIFE

If life is driven by deceit and lies (which it surely is), what is the value of truth?

Lying is systemic - we can't help it. "I've had no problems at all with her - she's a lovely motor.", says the man selling his wreck of a motor car to an unsuspecting buyer. "This has been a lovely home - so solid and nurturing.", says the woman telling prospective buyers of the house that is about to have mining tunnels running underneath it. "Yes, I have lots of experience in just-in-time manufacturing.", says the job interviewee who doesn't even know what the phrase "just-in-time" means. Nature lies too - the angler fish with its little dangly thing that wiggles about just above its gaping mouth, luring smaller fish who think the dangly thing is food - only to be gulped down by the grotesquely looking angler fish. Or the venus fly trap that lures insects into its trap with a sweet-tasting nectar, or the invisible spider's web, or the moths that look like wood bark so predators can't see them. Deception, disguise, and outright lies wherever you look. Sales and marketing departments employ professional liars, and

business is the art of making money out of lying. But all of these things serve one end - survival. The lie is the engine of survival, and in life, it is indispensable.

So does truth have any value at all? It has limited value in life, although we have laws and legal constructs such as guarantees and warranties, so our lying doesn't get out-of-hand. Even so - the lie is pervasive in all aspects of life - even the most personal and intimate. Truth is only of value in your inner world. People whose inner lives are infected with widespread lying either go insane or are very unhappy. Of course, people do lie to themselves - pretending to be enthusiastic when they are not, pretending to be calm when they are like a boiling cauldron inside. But most people do have at least a smidgen of inner honesty. There is a stark contrast between the value of the lie in life and within oneself. In life, it is essential; within oneself, it is poison, and only a person with inner honesty has any chance of inner peace.

Ambition is always dangerous territory, but spiritual ambition - enlightenment, moksha, salvation, nirvana - is the most dangerous of all.

Ambition is derived from a sense of lack. There would be no motive to do anything unless there was a perceived lack, and lack is always associated with pain. So ambition is an attempt to attain something in order to alleviate a pain - a sense of lack. In ordinary life the ambitions include the

desire for more money, power, sensual pleasure, but in the domain of spiritual ambitions people are looking for some kind of liberation from their miserable state - obviously, or they would have no desire to try and attain a different state. Instead of addressing the real reasons for their misery those with spiritual ambitions seek an escape route, and because these states that are sought are fictions, so those with spiritual ambitions become frustrated and bitter - although they would never admit it. Spiritual ambitions are the most dangerous of all ambitions.

A being that cannot know what it will be thinking in a minute's time, or whether it will even be alive, can make no claims of being in control.

We so much want to be in control. To be in control is to be safe - or so we tell ourselves. So it would be fair to say that our illusion of control is driven by fear, and particularly fear of the unknown. It also follows that relinquishing control will invoke even more fear, and so it might just be better to carry on with the illusion - but there is a price to pay. All the spontaneity and joy disappears from life as we become increasingly bracketed by our control mechanisms. Children, after all, revel in being out of control and with it comes play and spontaneity. It's your call - hide away within your illusion of control and live a well-ordered but dull life, or drop the pretense of control and feel the fresh breeze of freedom blow through your psyche.

As long as we strive we will suffer.

Striving and effort derive from a sense of lack. This lack might be purely physical, such as the need for food, liquids, sex, warmth. Or it might be intellectual - a striving to understand something. In all cases the sense of lack is a pain, otherwise we would not be motivated to address the pain through effort. Even the striving for more pleasure is an attempt to move from less to greater satisfaction. As long as we suffer we will strive.

Great news, your situation is hopeless.

You can know nothing except the certainty that you will die. On the surface it would seem that there is nothing you can do to alleviate this situation - which is exactly the point. Your situation is hopeless - abandon all efforts to make it otherwise.

Hope is the destroyer of inner peace.

If you hope you also fear, and fear is the mind killer. The doubt that accompanies hope will eat you from the inside. Abandon your hopes and know peace.

By craving freedom you become less free.

Most people have a relatively naive idea of what freedom might be - lots of money, limitless power, going off-grid, deliverance from mortal life. Money comes with emotional bondage - people worry about it more when they have lots of it than they do when they have just a modest amount. As for power - well, power is something that has to be safeguarded 24x7 - there is always someone else ready to take it. Going off-grid is usually day-in and day-out hassle. And any notion of a "spiritual" deliverance from this human life is just imagination. If someone craves freedom, it merely means they are not free - and how could they be? We are determined by cause and effect, just like everything else - organic robots. The only freedom that is available to human beings is the total acceptance of their lack of freedom. Only then do we stop struggling against the inevitable and can sit back and row our boat gently down the stream.

Denial of futility and emptiness is more painful than their acceptance.

Better keep busy because the bogeyman might get you if you rest for five minutes. Your busyness is like a skater on thin ice - to stop might result in you sinking into a bottomless pit of black, cold water - the realization of the apparent futility and emptiness of life. I say "apparent" because having told ourselves fairy stories about the big

daddy in the sky, how our lives have a purpose, how tomorrow will be better than today, we automatically set up the opposites. You cannot think of black without automatically thinking of white. And so we cling on to the pretty stuff - meaning, purpose, self-importance, progress - and we studiously avoid their opposites - meaninglessness, purposelessness, insignificance and degeneracy. So if you are going to believe that life has meaning and significance, it would be as well to accept the opposites of futility and emptiness, and this way, the bogeyman doesn't get a look in. Better than this however would be to throw ideas such as meaning and purpose into the trash can - they are human inventions dreamed up in an attempt to make life look prettier.

Don't be afraid of the bad times, it is the good times that should be feared - they will give you confidence and hope and you will be poorly prepared for the bad times that inevitably follow. Don't be a sucker.

That person you fancy is warming to your advances, and you just got a significant pay rise at work. In a few days, you fly off on vacation in Hawaii, and your doctor just gave you a clean bill of health. You glow in your well-being and good fortune - until you don't. The hotel shown in the travel brochure is nothing like the pit you find yourself staying in. Your employer is having hard times and has to fire you, and that person you fancied has just given you the cold shoulder. And then to cap it all, something starts growing on the side of your nose - not dangerous apparently, but

very unsightly. Life set you up, and then it pulled the rug from under your feet. It doesn't do to anthropomorphize life, but let's do it anyway. So, being a spiteful little fucker, life delivers a whole pile of goodies, and you feel on top of the world. As soon as you've been set up, life is free to stick the knife in. And life sticks the knife in for all of us sooner or later - we die. But there are plenty of little deaths along the way. The moral of the story is "don't believe in life," and by "believe," I mean, don't be suckered. When things are going well, just remember that the only way will be down from the crest of your wave. As a result, you will be less prone to the games of the spiteful little fucker.

Nature doesn't require that you are happy or sane, it just requires that you procreate and then die.

Happiness and misery are no concern of nature. The machinery of nature wants you to procreate, live long enough to rear your offspring, and then fade into oblivion. During this journey, life has no regard for your mental state provided you get the job done, and so it becomes your responsibility to ensure, as far as you can, that life is tolerable and maybe even happy. Our natural drivers would tend to push us in the direction of misery since we are loaded up with obligations and stressful situations, all of which take our energy and usually make us anxious. This being the case, it isn't too difficult to see that happiness is not a natural state and requires an individual to have self-knowledge and knowledge of the world. It needs us to be

unusually self-focused and not to accept the default state of being a bag of genetics that nature can use to create another generation - which in turn will do the same. Happiness is your responsibility. Take the hand that nature deals, and happiness may be elusive. Take the trouble to come to understand yourself and the way the world works, and happiness (or at least less misery) is a genuine possibility. Nature doesn't even require that you are sane; simply pass on your genetics to the next generation, and you might as well have been Einstein as far as nature is concerned. Happiness is against nature.

Resentment makes the world go round.

EMOTIONS

Attempts to change are acts of violence against oneself.

Where on earth did you get the idea that you needed to change? Maybe it was one of those awful parents you had, or a schoolteacher, or maybe your "mates", and perhaps even that person you fancied but who played hard-to-get. Well, drop the idea of changing yourself; you are fine as you are. In any case, the people who would have us improve only want us to do so for their benefit - to serve their purposes - why else would they want it. To change yourself to accommodate other people is an act of violence toward yourself. The problem often goes a bit deeper in that we might have had total bastards for parents who were always telling us to be smarter, more productive, not so lazy, more polite, and that we were a bad boy or girl. That stuff sticks, and when we get older, the bastard voice is still making itself heard in our head. All we can do is become aware of it and tell it politely to fuck off.

As far as emotional states are concerned, don't fix - feel.

There is a natural tendency, encouraged by our notion of what is "normal", to want to fix many of our emotional states. Envy, jealousy, anger, hatred, boredom, and many other so called "negative emotions" are painful to some extent and so there often arises the desire to fix them. The fix often involves alcohol, entertainment, drugs, sex, comfort eating, spiritual pursuits, and many other marvelous inventions of recent times such as Facebook. The best way to deal with painful emotions is not to try and fix them but to go into them. Since emotions are in the body, someone who is sensitive to their bodily states can put their attention on the emotion as it manifests in the body. Doing this avoids denial and harmful habits and has the effect of "absorbing" the emotion within a relatively short span of time without side-effects.

Misery always follows gratification.

We all go running after gratification - a sense of fullness to fill an otherwise yawning emptiness. Gratification comes from pleasures of the body - a delicious meal, good sex, a workout in the gym. It can also come from pleasures of the mind - a task completed, viewing a beautiful vista, a skill learned. Spiritual people seek the ultimate gratification - enlightenment or salvation - a gratification that never ends. But here is the rub. You've attained or experienced

whatever gratification was in your line of sight - then what? When you've got to the top of the roller-coaster, there is only one way to go - down. And so the gratification seekers live this neurotic life of highs and lows, desperately seeking a new high that doesn't have a low. The cold-turkey after gratification is experienced as a state of misery. Spiritual folk are more afflicted with this than your average Joe. They swing between the euphoria of meeting their new guru to the realization that it's the same old crap they just abandoned - but the search goes on.

Never trust a "spiritual" person.

SOCIETY

Definition of a new age person - someone who is generally ignorant of science and philosophy, but is happy to proclaim with certainty on the most difficult questions.

It could well be that the new-age movement has done more to damage the general intelligence of the human race than anything else in its history (except religion). Human beings dislike the uncertainty of not knowing, so they invent all kinds of clap-trap to relieve themselves of the tension. But there is another, darker-motive behind the superstitions and pseudo-science characteristic of the new-age movement. New age people want stuff - material stuff, money, good health, sensory titillation, wild experiences, relief from worry - and so on. For these reasons, "The Secret" (think of something, and it will happen - for those unfamiliar) found fertile ground among the new-age community. So it is precisely those people who want stuff the most who are keenest to latch on to any old nonsense that promises the goodies without any effort whatsoever on their part. Not only do new-age people have all the

answers, but it seems they also represent the more grasping segment of the population.

Definition of an optimist: someone who is a master of self-deception and denial.

Have you made your five positive affirmations this morning? And I hope your schedule is filled with power meetings, a trip to the gym, dinner with Fred and Sally, and anything else you can cram into the day - because the one thing you cannot afford to do is be still. Oh no, to be still means that you might start thinking about stuff - you know, death, futility, meaninglessness, and so on. Better keep busy - stay in denial. And shucks your "millionaire by Christmas" plans came to naught, as did your plan to lose fifty pounds - carefully monitored on your iPhone app. It's those donut binges that did it - comfort food to distract you from all the emotional pain. What, with the world not contorting itself to deliver on your juvenile ambitions, and that extra weight (donuts), and your relationship falling apart because your partner is sick of having their expectations raised by your wild imaginings, the only thing you are likely to achieve is extreme misery. But a new set of ra-ra morning affirmations should sort it all out.

Meanwhile, your friend Joe the pessimist, who you secretly despise, seems to be doing rather well. All those negative thoughts he entertains when setting out on a project - he considers that things might actually go wrong, and he even plans for it. Just as well that you are a master

of self-deception and denial because its the only thing you have left.

Violence - when one entity diminishes the survival prospects of another entity. All life is violent.

You cannot live without violence, after all you do eat things that have been killed on your behalf. But it goes much deeper than this. The rich exploit the poor. The poor have lower life expectancy - this is violence. Ideologies, religions, and vested interests bring about war. People die - this is violence. Envy is systemic - the delight in another's misfortune and pain at their good fortune - this is violence. Nature's signature is violence.

Don't tell your "friends" of your good fortune - they'll hate you for it.

Envy and resentment make the world go round. If we could see the secret resentments people wrap in pink ribbons, and do their best to disguise, the world would look unbearably ugly. The most extreme form of this behavior is schadenfreude - delight in other people's misfortune. So, if you have a bit of a win on the lottery, don't tell anyone - they will hate you and be solicitous at the same time - even Satan himself can't bear to see such behavior. The reason people flinch at the good fortune of others is simple enough to understand. Since the world,

and specifically, human life, is a competition for resources, you might see someone else's good fortune as a threat - they suddenly have more resources and power than you do. Remember - when you are weaker, others are stronger, and when you are stronger, others are weaker. This rule is the law of the beast - and we are all beasts under the polite manners and charming exterior.

But this is just the tip of the "resentment" iceberg. It doesn't do to display your happiness either if, indeed, you are happy - people will hate you for that too. The majority of people are bitter and resentful because they believed in life and life crapped all over them. So any display of power (and happiness is a power) will probably be met with inner resentment - how dare you be happy?

Even the most refined emotions expressed in polite company are nothing more than attempts to dominate, dismiss, boast, and achieve some level of superiority.

It's quite well known that the more a person dislikes you, the more effusive they will be with their greetings - loud proclamations, painted smiles, aggressive handshakes, over attentiveness. But this is just the stuff of "normal" social interaction - and what is that saying? Most socializing is just a power play - look at what I've got or have done, it's much better than what you've got or done. I can't be alone in having to listen to "friends" blabbing

about their vacation to Peru, and how fucking wonderful the whole thing was, how it was life-changing, and all this while they play Peruvian pan-pipe music in the background. They have been transformed in a way you cannot possibly be. And don't let's restrict this behavior to the desperate professional classes who have everything other than happiness, oh no, we can include those new-age seekers in this too. A genuine social exchange where each party wishes the other well and wants to hear what they have to say is rarer than the proverbial rocking horse shit. You may never encounter it. Everyone wants to talk and boast, and no one wants to listen.

If you don't want your " friends" to think you are a weirdo then for fucks sake don't try and say anything even remotely intelligent - like, "you are going to die".

Some advice: when chatting with your mates, you will be on safe ground if you restrict your conversation to topics such as fashion, travel, home improvement, football, work, motor cars, cosmetics, breast implants, bone cancer, animal slaughter, death ... Oops, got a bit carried away there - cross out the last three. I guess you already know that people are in deep denial about the realities of life, and they will not thank you for reminding them. So polite social conversation should always be centered around trivial issues - Justin Bieber's new hairstyle, a new rejuvenating face cream, your holiday pics, beer, your latest restaurant discovery, that person you both know whose

partner is cheating on them - and so on. You will lose "friends" very quickly if you talk about anything real - it will scare the shit out of them, and they will hate you for it. You will be labeled weirdo, and in former times you would have been burned at the stake. Today you will just be socially isolated, and if you are injured in a traffic accident, no one will come to your aid, and your doctor will over-prescribe your medicines to put you out of your misery. Who knows, society might just create special places for people like you who want to deal with reality - far away from a general population busy indulging their narcissism on Facebook, watching porno, taking their antidepressants and anxiety medication, deep in resentment and sadness, but optimistic about the future all the same because someone told them to be - and above all they wouldn't want to be weird.

If you can observe it, you are not it.

IGNORANCE IS BLISS

Be silent you know nothing.

Here we are trapped inside our senses and thought structures, and we flatter ourselves that we can know "reality" or "the truth". The fact that our brain constructs our so-called reality seems to be generally overlooked - and there is no way out of the simulation it creates. Even space and time are constructs of our mind, as are cause and effect and the fact we see the world comprised of objects. And as far as truth is concerned, it should already be apparent that we cannot know absolute truths if we cannot know reality. The sciences are merely a study of how our minds represent reality - a survey of our simulation. This doesn't detract from the fact that we can know a great deal about the simulation itself - I know how to tie my shoelaces, for example - but knowledge beyond my senses and mental structures is impossible. So - be silent, you know nothing (that matters).

Emptiness is full of possibilities. Fullness is empty of possibility.

It's like one of those cute "zen" type statements - the kind that sounds profound but means absolutely nothing. But this one does say something. Have you ever noticed that people who might be classed as "know-it-alls" are generally the most unhelpful option to turn to when we need some hard facts? The problem with "know-it-alls" is that since they already know everything, they never actually learn anything, and so their bullshit and bluster is just that - and it's wholly useless. People who consider themselves experts have no room for anything new - they're already full of nonsense. This cute "zen" type statement is particularly applicable to people who think they have the world and their existence all sorted out. The fact we can know nothing of real substance seems to have been unnoticed by them. So when the world doesn't behave according to their understanding, they get grumpy and resentful - and utterly incapable of learning from experience. To be inwardly empty is unbearable for most people, and so they fill themselves with all kinds of bullshit. But for someone who can live with an awareness of their total ignorance, there is plenty of room for new information. The problem is that nature "abhors a vacuum." and since we are a part of life, we behave the same way. It requires a conscious effort to remain empty and not let our inner state be filled with all kinds of nonsense. The payoff is that life becomes more spontaneous and exciting - emptiness is full of possibilities.

Every decision you ever make will be a mistake.

Those people who are always telling you what might have happened in their life if only they had not had such shit parents or shit teachers, or if they had just taken that opportunity to become a famous Hollywood actor. And if they had jumped on that lucky break to become a famous actor, they would now be whining that they missed the opportunity to become a quantum physicist because acting sucks and is so dull. We all go through life, thinking that if only we had decided that way instead of this, we'd be much happier. This type of thinking is the dumbest type of thinking a human being is capable of. First, we believe we had a choice and that given the same circumstances, we would act differently, and second, we think that things would have been much better if only we had made different decisions - duh. So let it be known that all the decisions you ever make will be mistakes, and more than this, they will be the only decisions you are going to make anyway.

Without courage - nothing.

The benefits of pessimism are numerous but they don't come without a price. If we are going to deal with reality we need to become acquainted with it, and that isn't always pretty. Unless a person has the courage to stare reality in the face, with all its cruelty and apparent futility then they will not have the knowledge to deal with life as it really is,

and may just fall back on the fantasies of the optimist. It isn't enough to simply think about the nature of life, we have to understand it in the depths of us. But the strange thing is, that the more we contemplate on the barbarity and meaninglessness of life so it becomes less offensive, less threatening, and the more we can get on with living a pessimistic life. We have, in effect, exorcised the bogeyman - the facts that most people dare not acknowledge lest they should knock them down from their precarious perch of optimism. The courage we are talking of here is not all that common, and so the pessimistic way of life will always be for the minority.